

Know Your Audience - A Multi-pronged Approach to Information Transfer

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Impact Nugget

Net books and video clips have been added to the arsenal of Coffee Pots, Crop Updates and meetings to help the members of the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program address the needs of an audience that is as diverse as it is geographically spread out.

Issues/Needs and Audiences

The geographically large area covered by the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program creates difficulties in developing programming that fits the needs of all growers in all areas. In addition, vineyard and winery start-ups continue to be one of the growth areas in the region, with interest typically coming from individuals with little or no agricultural background. Many of the new growers are approaching the business as a part-time venture as they continue in their full time jobs, making it difficult for them to attend much of the programming that has been developed and is well received by existing conventional growers.

Extension Response

Informal weekly Coffee Pot meetings have traditionally been held during the growing season at grower venues throughout the Lake Erie Grape Belt. Armed with information developed using Turning Point Technologies 'Clicker' Audience response system during the 2010 Coffee Pot season, Developing a Business Plan and Succession Planning were discussed at each Coffee Pot meeting starting the first week of April and running through the last week of August. This face-to-face interaction is critical in the learning process by the LERGP extension team of the particular qualities of an area, especially the differences in pest pressure seen during the growing season due to climatic differences across the region. In recent years the LERGP Extension team has built upon the Lake Erie grape processing industry's desire to move communication with growers to a digital format through a weekly electronic newsletter, The Crop Update.

To assist growers in becoming more computer savvy, the team has purchased 10 net book computers for use in training sessions on anything from basic computer skills to record keeping with TracGrape and/or spreadsheets developed by the team. Training was conducted on the updated NEWA (Network for Environment and Weather Applications) website to provide growers insight into the weather information available from vineyards in the area as well as training on how to use the new, improved disease forecast model information in their vineyard IPM Strategy. In addition, training was conducted on the use of the new Degree-Day Phenology model for grape berry moth management.

The following electronic information transfer tools have been developed, implemented, and maintained for the grape industry in New York and Pennsylvania.

- a. The Crop Update. This electronic newsletter is a collaborative effort of Lake Erie Regional Grape Program extension team members in New York and Pennsylvania and is delivered on a weekly basis via email.
- b. Historical weather database incorporating weather records for the Fredonia Vineyard Lab from 1926 to present. <http://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/weather.htm>

- c. New York State Grape IPM Web site home page
<http://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/IPM/IPMHome.htm>
- d. Elements of IPM for Grapes in New York <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/elements/grapes.asp>
- e. New York and Pennsylvania Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes
<http://ipmguidelines.org/grapes/default.asp>
- f. 2010 Production Guide for Organic Grapes http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide/grapes.pdf
- g. Lake Erie Regional Grape Program web site home page <http://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/index.htm>
- h. Videos of production practices featuring growers who have implemented research based information into their vineyard operation as well as the economics involved with the practice.
<http://www.youtube.com/LERGPvids>

Accomplishments and Impacts

Computer training on TracGrape, record keeping spreadsheets and NEWA has been conducted using the mobile computer lab for small groups that was not possible, or at the very least difficult, before the purchase of the net books. Previously a computer lab at the local community college would need to be reserved or growers were asked to bring in their own computers or were able to 'borrow' from a limited number of laptops with different operating systems and versions of software. Many classes needed to be cancelled due to lack of enrollment making the cost of renting the computer lab prohibitive. The mobile computer lab allows for smaller class sizes, which better fits into the educational process, while also allowing the presenter to concentrate on the training rather than the differences in the computers or software. TracGrape training was provided to assist Cliffstar and Canandaigua Wine Company (local area processors) in their move toward paperless submission of spray records by growers delivering grapes to their processing facilities.

Collaborators

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